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S.F. MAYOR'S RACE: CAN HONGISTO RECOVER???

Editor's note: There have been some new developments in the race for Mayor of San Francisco. Here is a CALPEEK update...

...Just when insiders were writing him off, S.F. Co. Assessor Richard Hongisto restarted his race for mayor by hiring consultant John Whitehurst and his Strategy & Campaign Management Group. In the past 14 days, the campaign claims to have hired 4 field operatives (4 more to be added); put Elizabeth Hongisto to work as a full-time fundraiser (she's no novice, having worked campaigns for Clint Reilly and was an aide to the late George Moscone); and has mailed out 70,000 brochures --- with some HITS aimed at both incumbent Mayor Art Agnos and S.F. Sup. Angela Alioto, who is Hongisto's key rival on the left...

...Is this enough to put to zip back in the Hongisto campaign? Some don't think it is. For example, Alioto has picked off two KEY Hongisto supporters in Sup. Harry Britt and his top aide, Jean Harris, president of the powerful Harvey Milk Gay & Lesbian Demo Club. Harris is now one of Alioto's key organizer. Hongisto also lost his treasurer, Jim Nickoff, to the Alioto campaign. In addition, the S.F. chapter of NOW, which had previously endorsed Hongisto, has now also endorsed Alioto. The S.F. chapter of NWPC may follow...

...What about Agnos? Sources say he's a candidate who won't move much beyond his 28-30% support UNLESS he changes his message. As one CALPEEK source said, "It does NOT matter how much mail he puts out, until he admits things aren't working, he won't move."...

...In effect, Agnos is caught between Hongisto & Alioto on the LEFT and former SFPD Chief Frank Jordan and S.F. Sup. Tom Hsieh

on the RIGHT. If past history is worth looking at, consider this: In 1975, Sup. Dianne Feinstein (once a frontrunner) was sandwiched between State Sen. Moscone and fellow Sup. John Barbagelata, AND she lost. A repeat in 1987, when S.F. Sup. John Molinari got sandwiched between two liberals, Agnos and Roger Boas. Boas nearly knocked Molinari off in the primary, but just lost out. But that was all it took and Agnos went on to crush Molinari in the runoff. Will the candidate in the middle get mashed in 1991?? Stay tuned...

FULL METAL JACKET: SMOKING GUN MEMOS CAST DOUBT ON 1989 ASSAULT WEAPONS LEGISLATION.

Editor's note: While lawmakers and staff from the AG's office try to figure out how to clean up the controversial Roberti-Roos Assault Weapons Control Act of 1989, CALPEEK has obtained some MEMOS from the CA Dept. of Justice which indicate that as early as October of 1988, legal experts working for former AG John Van de Kamp did NOT think it was possible to draw up a precise/clear cut law to ban ASSAULT RIFLES, without banning ALL semi-automatic weapons. This October 31, 1988 memo by S.C. Helsley, then acting asst. director of the Investigations & Enforcement Branch, raises all sorts of questions that should be answered before SB 263 or any other clean up laws are enacted. This is the FIRST in a series of reports about these memos and how the controversial assault weapons bill got enacted into law...

...The Helsley memos are as close to "smoking guns" as you can get. Had this memo been leaked in either 1989 or during the first part of 1990, the gubernatorial campaign of John Van de Kamp(D) might have been blown out of the water. For example,

{Continued Next Page}

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Helsley's memo says that in a survey of CA crimes, "The figures are self-explanatory and confirmed our intuition that assault type firearms were the least of our worries. It's really the .22 and .38 caliber handguns and 12 gauge shotguns that inflict the majority of the carnage."...

...But the last line of this 10/31/88 memo really says it all: "Unless a realistic definition can be developed for 'assault weapons,' we should LEAVE THE ISSUE ALONE." And guess what? According to a second Helsley memo dated Feb. 14, 1991, in early January of 1989, shortly BEFORE the now infamous Stockton schoolyard massacre, AG John Van de Kamp held a meeting with his executive staff, at which time "to the obvious displeasure of some of his key advisors, said he would NOT support assault weapon legislation unless hard data could be developed."...

...Politically, VdK has always been a very cautious person and he probably didn't want to stir up the powerful CA gun lobby with support for a bill that could cause all sorts of political problems...

...But decisions have a way of changing --- especially when 5 children get blown away in cold blood on a Calif. schoolyard. It was at this point that VdK flip-flopped positions to SUPPORT legislation to ban assault weapons. Even though the legislation was drafted by Roberti and Roos, it was VdK who got most of the positive exposure. And there's no doubt VdK's up front stand in favor of the assault rifle ban helped his yet-unannounced Demo campaign for governor. BUT had that Helsley memo been leaked, VdK would have been made to look like a political opportunist. More next week...

HJTA ISSUES TAXPAYERS SELF-DEFENSE MANUAL.

The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Assn. (HJTA) has written and distributed a book (it's really a manual) on how to be a one-person PAC and fight higher taxes. It's easy to read and very clever. It's even got a section on how to write letters to the editor. Toward the back of the booklet there is a section on TAX FACTS - a very useful Q&A. For info about the manual, call (213)384-9656. FYI: there's a great photo of the late Howard Jarvis on the front cover...

CA-NV SUPER SPEED TRAIN: BACK ON TRACK???

A few months ago it looked as though the proposal to build a high speed rail link between Las Vegas and Anaheim was all but DEAD. Recession, lack of capital. Now CALPEEK sources think The Bechtel Corp., which is the franchise holder for this project, is feeling more "optimistic." We'll know around 1 p.m., Sept. 6 when the Super Speed Train Commission meets at the Red Lion Inn in Ontario. During this meeting the Bechtel Corp. is supposed to give a progress report. Sources think the report will be "encouraging." FYI: Assemblyman Richard Katz (D-Sepulveda) is carrying legislation to extend the life of the commission another year. Without this legislation, the commission would go out of business in the next month or so. Stay tuned...

AB 101: GAY RIGHTS BILL IS HEADED FOR GOV. WILSON'S DESK - WILL HE SIGN OR VETO BILL?

Editor's note: AB 101 by Assemblyman Terry Friedman (D-L.A.) has passed two key State senate committees and it seems very likely that this bill (sometimes called the Gay Bill of Rights) will WIN full senate approval. The KEY question is whether Gov. Pete Wilson will sign the bill. Here is a CALPEEK update & analysis...

...With very HEAVY arm twisting by State Senate Pres. David Roberti (D-L.A.), Friedman's AB 101 got out of the Senate Appropriations Comm. Aug. 19 on a 7-4 vote, the minimum needed. CALPEEK sources say that committee chair Al Alquist (D-San Jose) was told to vote yes or LOSE his chairmanship. And Sen. Ruben Ayala (D-San Bernardino) was replaced on the committee by Sen. Henry Mello (D-Watsonville). Alquist and Ayala were set to vote NO...

...As CALPEEK went to press, the final senate floor vote had not taken place. In an effort to pick up more Republican support, Friedman killed off the HOUSING discrimination part of the bill. AB 101 now only applies to discrimination in employment. Will this be enough to impress Gov. Pete Wilson???

...Earlier this year Wilson said "it was likely" he would sign AB 101. But the tone of a statement issued by Wilson's office seemed very CAUTIOUS. As CALPEEK has noted in past stories, 28 members of the Assembly

GOP Caucus have asked Wilson to VETO this proposal. In addition, The Rev. Lou Sheldon's Traditional Values Coalition is planning a REFERENDUM if this bill becomes law. A referendum, especially in JUNE of 1992, might bring out a very heavy, conservative vote --- and these voters might also be inclined to vote AGAINST Wilson's appointee to the U.S. Senate, GOPer John Seymour. These are factors Wilson is looking at...

...On the other hand, if Wilson vetoes this bill, some militant gay groups may decide to OUT some GOP lawmakers or members of Wilson's Administration. Either way, Gov. Wilson is caught between two tough choices. There are those in the administration who think a VETO is the best political decision at this time, especially in light of the tough campaign ahead for Seymour against U.S. Rep. Bill Dannemeyer(R), who has repeatedly called Seymour "pro-homosexual." Stay tuned...

ANOTHER CALIFORNIAN GOES FOR WHITE HOUSE.

The former mayor of Irvine in conservative Orange Co., Larry Agran, has announced his candidacy for the Demo presidential nomination in 1992. For those who may have missed it, earlier this year Agran was the chairperson of George McGovern's Demo exploratory committee, until the former senator folded his tent last May. In an L.A. Times story, McGovern described Agran's chances of winning the Demo nomination as "the longest of long shots."...

...Agran may soon be joined on the campaign trail by former CA Gov. Jerry Brown. One CALPEEK source has noted that Brown and Agran "have lots in common -- both are graduates of Star Fleet."...

...Agran was elected to the Irvine City Council in the late 1970s and served as mayor until 1990 when he was defeated for reelection. Many found it surprising that a staunch liberal like Agran could survive in the heart of conservative Orange Co., but he was fairly popular until he pushed through a law to ban discrimination against gays and lesbians. The law was quickly repealed in a referendum sponsored by The Rev. Lou Sheldon and the Traditional Values Coalition. A short time later Agran was defeated for reelection. Stay tuned...

1992 U.S. SENATE RACES: SOME ODDS & ENDS.

Editor's note: Here's an update on some recent developments about the two U.S. Senate contests here in Calif...

- DIFI MOVING IN SO. CALIF. - Former S.F. Mayor Dianne Feinstein is beginning to step up her campaign activities in the southland. From 6-8 p.m., Sept. 5, DiFi will address Women In Public Affairs and the L.A. Jr. Chamber of Commerce, The City Club, 333 S. Grand Ave., 54th Floor, L.A. For info, Francis Williams (213)483-1581, ext. 222...

...DiFi also has set up a So. Calif. finance office in the mid-Wilshire area of L.A. (213)252-8226. Michael Selsman is the So. Calif. Finance chair, assisted by Tim O'Brien. She's got a number of private fundraisers set for September. Still no word as to whether Demo Controller Gray Davis will jump into this primary for the short-term, 2-yr. seat now held by appointed U.S. Sen. John Seymour(R)...

- BUSH AT SEYMOUR DINNER - President George Bush will be the guest of honor at a \$1,000 per person fundraiser for U.S. Sen. John Seymour(R), Sept. 19 at the Century Plaza Hotel in L.A. And yes, Pres. Bush endorsed Seymour for reelection several months ago. GOP fundraising consultant Joyce Valdez is in charge...

...FYI: Seymour's campaign has hired TV-media consultant Roger Ailes. For those who have forgotten, Ailes produced TV spots for Gov. George Deukmejian's 1986 reelection and for George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign...

CAMPAIGN TRAINING CONF. SPONSORED BY CLCV.

The CA League of Conservation Voters(CLCV) and the Conservation Voters Education Project will sponsor a 2-day campaign training conference, Sept. 21-22 at CA State Univ. L.A. The conference theme is "Building Environmental Leadership for Tomorrow." Confirmed speakers and trainers include consultants Sid Galanty, Victor Griego, Joe Shumate and Darry Sragow. Cost is \$125. For info, Brian Huse (415)896-5550...

EARLY PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY BILL IN TROUBLE.

The odds that Calif. voters will be casting ballots in an early March 1992 presidential primary are getting SLIMMER by the minute. Assemblyman Jim Costa's AB 1820 is hung up in the State Senate Appropriations Committee, with NO hearing date set. Even if the bill were somehow to win full legislative approval, sources tell CALPEEK that Gov, Pete Wilson is having second thoughts about signing AB 1820 --- in fact he said he may veto the legislation. Why the change of heart by Wilson? As CALPEEK noted several weeks ago, REAPPORTIONMENT may take longer than the Sept. 13th legislative adjournment deadline. And if there are legal battles over reapportionment, there's no telling when final boundaries will be ready -- thus a March 1992 consolidated primary would be impractical. What about a split primary? NO way --- the cost would be an additional \$38-40 million and Republicans won't go for that. What about amending the bill to make it take effect for 1996? Very possible. Stay tuned...

HISPANICS TOPIC FOR COMMONWEALTH CLUB TALK.

Linda Chavez, former president of U.S. English, will address the Commonwealth Club of CA, 11:45 a.m., Sept. 13, Ralston Room, Sheraton Palace Hotel, S.F. Her speech is titled, "Out of the Barrio: The Emerging Hispanic Middle Class." For info & RSVPs, (415)597-6705...

CA BALLOT MEASURE UPDATE: SON OF PROP. 73.

The CA SOS's office has given GOP Assemblyman Ross Johnson(R-Fullerton) the okay to collect signatures on an initiative statute that some are calling "Son of Prop 73." This measure's official title is "Campaign Funding. Contribution Limits." Like the original Prop. 73, the new Johnson measure has a contribution limit of \$1,000 for individuals, \$2,500 for small PACS and \$5,000 for board based committees. HOWEVER, the donations are limited to "each election cycle," instead of FISCAL year. The proposal applies to both State & local elected officials. The measure also bans ALL contributions from CORPORATIONS and from labor unions. Johnson has until Jan. 13, 1992 to collect 384,974. For info (916)445-7448...

CALPEEK'S CONSULTANTS DIRECTORY: UPDATE.

CALPEEK is still missing questionnaires from a number of consultants. So all you consultants who are sitting on these forms, please fill them out and send them in ASAP. Have a question about advertising in the 1991-92 Consultants Directory? Call Jill Barad at (818)906-0960. Jill is assisting CALPEEK with the coordination of the Directory...

NEW JOBS, ADDRESSES AND PERSONNEL NOTES.

Editor's note: Here are some items to mark down in your notebook...

- Cavalier & Associates has moved into larger digs at 1121 "L" St., # 810, Sacto 95814. Same phone, but new FAX is (916)444-6544...

- PR exec. Carl Terzian has been elected vice president of the L.A. City Fire Commission...

- Orange Co.-based Adler Droz, Inc. has a new address & phone: 27241 La Paz Rd., Ste. 123, Laguna Niguel, CA 92656. (714) 831-0744...

- Sacto-based Nelson & Lucas Communications lands the troubled Southern Pacific RR account...

- L.A.-based campaign consultant Steve Powell has moved his company to 3287 Keeshen Drive, L.A. 90066. New phone & FAX are (213)572-6000 and (213)572-6002(fax)...

- After 9 yrs. with Burson-Marsteller, where he was a Sr. VP and asst. GM of the L.A. office, Mark Boyer jumps to Stoorza, Ziegus & Metzger in L.A. as an exec. VP. Office is at 123 S. Figueroa St., #190-D, L.A. 90012 (213)891-2822...

- Kate Harris has been named exec. director of the CA Abortion Rights Action League/South (CARAL). She succeeds Robin Schneider, who was promoted to associate director for program...

- Linda Mullin has been elected president of The CA Pro Life Council, the State affiliate of the Nat'l Right to Life Cmt. She replaces Robin Murch, who held the post for the past 4 years...